

**WIN!** Meze 109 PRO open-backed headphones worth £769!

# hi-fi+



December 2022

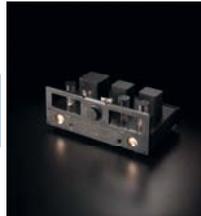
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# AWARDS

The best products of the year



208  
PAGES!



£8.99



Plus! Tests of Allnic Audio, MBL, REL, and Synergistic Research



# Karan Acoustics Master Collection PHONOa

**HIGHLY COMMENDED**  
PHONO STAGE (COST NO OBJECT)

**K**aran Acoustics Master Collection PHONOa – the latest in the revised pinnacle-product line from electronics experts Karan Acoustics – is the synthesis and expression of Milan Karan’s 30 years as an audio electronics designer. This is the ideal combination of expertise and modernity; producing products that build upon decades of painstaking testing, but produce sound quality that would be virtually impossible at even the turn of the century, thanks to improved circuit design tools and infinitely improved componentry.

The two-box PHONOa builds on the strengths of previous Karan phono stages, with refinements in every aspect of product design, including new circuit board designs made with new levels of isolation and grounding, sophisticated casework and even special PCB stand-offs and Critical Mass Systems feet to keep resonance to new low levels.

In our test, Alan Sircom felt that “It’s almost surprising how good the Karan Master Collection PHONOa sounds, or – perhaps more accurately – how good your records and your cartridge sound when played through the Master Collection PHONOa.” And said that, “This is like direct-injecting vinyl into your ears, and it’s a captivating experience.” Alan also noted that, “Images are precise, stable and perfectly dimensioned. Dynamic range is in the ‘jump out of your seat’ level when called upon, but subtle and full of texture.”

He concluded by declaring the PHONOa to be, “tonally perfect, dynamically unparalleled and producing a soundstage that is only constrained by the record before it and the system afterwards. This is how music should sound through the very best of the best.”

Reviewed in Issue **209**

Manufacturer • [karanacoustics.com](http://karanacoustics.com)

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# Karan Acoustics Master Collection POWERa Mono

**WINNER**  
POWER AMPLIFIER



**K**aran Acoustics has long made big, powerful and heavy mono power amplifiers, but in the Master Collection POWERa Mono, the company simply eclipses all that has gone before.

The specification sheet of the Master Collection POWERa Mono reads like a Who's Who of the best in amplifier design; Sanken bipolar transistors, treated as completely separate 'polarity halves' that have their own independent mains transformer and accompanying power supply. In other words, two mains cables for each amplifier! Include new levels of reservoir capacitance, a built-in (defeatable) power conditioner and a 2.15kW per channel output, and this is clearly an amplifier that will confidently drive any loudspeaker load without breaking into a sweat. Even the new, more curvaceous chassis and feet are designed to reduce resonance.

In our test, Alan Sircom said, "It's a scintillating performance, showing you not only what the devices up-stream and down are capable of, but also pointing out just where other amplifiers get it so very wrong" He also felt that, "this is the antidote to those amplifiers that push sound at you; initially impressive but ultimately wearing." Adding that, "in this case" the treble sparkles and the midrange is clear and quicksilver fast." Also, it "resets your musical and audio levels each time you play a track; you get that 'first time I heard it' feeling over and over again."

Alan concluded the review, saying, "the Master Collection POWERa Mono is the best balance of performance in terms of sheer power output and the quality of that power." and finally, "This is an amplifier with endless scale and dynamic range, yet doesn't shout about those properties."

Reviewed in Issue **203**

**Manufacturer** • [karanacoustics.com](http://karanacoustics.com)

“ This is the antidote to those amplifiers that push sound at you; initially impressive but ultimately wearing.